

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article having a liquid-retentive absorbing layer, a liquid-impermeable leakproof layer, and standing gathers on each side of said article which have an upright portion and an elastically extensible portion coming into planar contact with a wearer's skin while worn, each elastically extensible portion being substantially parallel to said absorbing layer and each upright portion extending between a portion near a corresponding longer side edge of said absorbing layer and a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions before being worn, wherein each elastically extensible portion is made of a sheet and at least one elastic member, said elastic member being fixed to said sheet, while such ~~which~~ is planar and unstretched, discretely in the longitudinal direction by adhesive applied discretely at intervals and extending transversely to the longitudinal direction thereof in its stretched state, and the parts of said sheet where said elastic member is not fixed are raised by contraction of said elastic member to form a plurality of hollow ridges parallel to each other on a side of said elastically extensible portion to be brought into contact with the wearer's skin in a linear manner along the contraction direction of said elastic member, said hollow ridges each extending across the contraction direction of said elastic member; wherein said absorbent article is substantially oblong, said standing gathers are provided along the respective longer sides of said

absorbent article, and said plurality of ridges are a large number of ridges formed across a width of a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article having a liquid-retentive absorbing layer, a liquid-impermeable leakproof layer, and standing gathers on each side of said article which have an upright portion and an elastically extensible portion coming into planar contact with a wearer's skin while worn, each elastically extensible portion being substantially parallel to said absorbing layer and each upright portion extending between a portion near a corresponding longer side edge of said absorbing layer and a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions before being worn, wherein each elastically extensible portion is made of a sheet and at least one elastic member, said elastic member being fixed to said sheet, while such is planar, discretely in the longitudinal direction thereof in its stretched state, and the parts of said sheet where said elastic member is not fixed are raised by contraction of said elastic member to form a plurality of hollow ridges parallel to each other on a side of said elastically extensible portion to be brought into contact with the wearer's skin in a linear manner along the contraction direction of said elastic member, said hollow ridges

each extending across the contraction direction of said elastic member; wherein said absorbent article is substantially oblong, said standing gathers are provided along the respective longer sides of said absorbent article, and said plurality of ridges are a large number of ridges formed across a width of a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions;

~~The absorbent article according to claim 1,~~ wherein each upright portion connects is directly attached to a middle in a width direction of a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions.

4. (Withdrawn) An absorbent article having a substantially oblong shape and comprising a liquid-retentive absorbing layer, a liquid-impermeable leakproof sheet, and standing gathers which are provided on respective longer sides of said article and each have an upright portion and an elastically extensible portion coming into planar contact with a wearer's skin while worn, each elastically extensible portion being substantially parallel to said absorbing layer and each upright portion extending between a portion near a corresponding longer side edge of said absorbing layer and a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions before being worn, wherein each elastically extensible portion is made of a fiber aggregate containing at least one elastic member and has a large number of ridges formed on its side to be brought into contact with the wearer's skin across the width thereof, said fiber aggregate forming said ridges having a lower density

than fiber aggregate forming valleys between every adjacent ridges; wherein said fiber aggregate containing said at least one elastic member is composed of two fiber aggregate layers and said at least one elastic member, and both of said two fiber aggregate layers protrude toward the wearer's skin when worn.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article according to claim 4, wherein said at least one elastic member interposed between said two fiber aggregate layers, and said fiber aggregate has compressed parts and non-compressed parts or weakly compressed parts that have been compressed under a weaker pressure than imposed to form said compressed parts, said compressed parts and said non-compressed part or weakly compressed parts alternating, said non-compressed parts or weakly compressed parts corresponding to said ridges and said compressed parts corresponding to said valleys.

7. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article according to claim 6, wherein said two fiber aggregate layers are thermally fused together in said compressed parts.

8. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article according to claim 4, wherein the line connecting the apices of said ridges is wavy in a longitudinal section of said elastically extensible portion.

9. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article according to claim 4, wherein each upright portion connects to a middle in a width direction of a corresponding one of said elastically extensible portions.

10. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein said absorbent article is ~~fixed~~ fixable to underwear in use.

11. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article according to claim 4, wherein said absorbent article is fixed to underwear in use.

Office Action dated: December 23, 2004
Response filed January 7, 2005

Appl. No. 10/056,485
Art Unit 3761

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is believed that the claims are now clear. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Art Unit: 3761

Response to Amendment



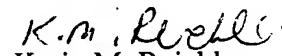
1. The reply filed on 10-04-04 is not fully responsive to the prior Office Action because of the following omission(s) or matter(s): The amendment to claim 3 does not comply with 37 CFR 1.121, effective 7-30-03, i.e. language both indicated as underlined and deleted. See 37 CFR 1.111. Since the above-mentioned reply appears to be *bona fide*, applicant is given **ONE (1) MONTH or THIRTY (30) DAYS** from the mailing date of this notice, whichever is longer, within which to supply the omission or correction in order to avoid abandonment. EXTENSIONS OF THIS TIME PERIOD MAY BE GRANTED UNDER 37 CFR 1.136(a).

2. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karin M. Reichle whose telephone number is (571) 272-4936. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Larry Schwartz can be reached on (571) 272-4390. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3761

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Karin M. Reichle
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3761

KMR
December 16, 2004